



Jim's Story

A disease won't stop him from walking

My name is Jim Dahlin. I'm an army veteran having served as a combat medic with the 4th infantry division in Vietnam from 1969-70. I was discharged in June 1971 and went on with the GI bill to become a nurse anesthetist. When I was 48, I rode a bicycle across the US from Seattle to Williamsburg, VA in 24 days, averaging 140 miles a day. Two short years later, at the age of 50, I was unable to even get on a bicycle. I had been diagnosed with a non-traumatic L2 AIS C spinal cord injury that required I use a wheelchair.

The Minneapolis VA and my introduction to exoskeletons

I didn't get involved with the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) until 2014 when I was required to receive an MRI at the Minneapolis VA. I needed to have my baclofen pump checked before I could be discharged and had to go to the SCI/D (spinal cord injury or disease) center. The physician I saw there told me that my disease qualified me to be seen and treated at the SCI/D center. As part of my two-day physical, I was seen by a physical therapist who asked me if I would be willing to try a new robotic therapy device. This new device was a wearable exoskeleton called EksoNR. I attended physical therapy three days a week for five weeks, including lots of time in EksoNR. It was so nice to stand and move, but unfortunately, EksoNR was designed only for therapy use and not for home or personal use.

"Its five-piece design makes it easy to assemble and put on, and if I spend some time away from my home, it has a travel case to place it in."

A few weeks passed before I got a call from another therapist in the SCI/D center who was looking for people to try ReWalk, an exoskeleton that was approved for home use. I went through training for three weeks to learn how to use the device. In order to get an exoskeleton approved to take home, you need to have someone training with you. My wife was that person who went through some of the training with me.



After completing my training, I was approved to take the ReWalk home for a three-month trial. After my trial period had ended, I returned the device and was asked if I wanted to have it purchased for me by the VA. During this time, I heard that another exoskeleton device was going to be available for trial in the next few months, so I made the decision to wait for the new exoskeleton before I would make a decision.

Why I chose Ekso Indego

When Ekso Indego became available for trial, my wife and I completed the training for it at the Minneapolis VA. I was then given the opportunity to take the exoskeleton home for a three-month trial as well.

After both trials, I made the decision to keep Ekso Indego for a few reasons. First, I can make adjustments like step height and step length while walking in the device. The modular five-piece design makes it easy to assemble and put on, and if I spend some time away from home, it has a travel case to store it.

“The thing I love most about an exo-skeleton is the ability to stand and walk and look someone straight in the face while talking.”

The thing I love most about Ekso Indego is the ability to stand and walk and look someone straight in the eye while talking with them. Those of us in wheelchairs know how tiring it can be on our necks to look up at someone standing while carrying on a long conversation. It’s good for the body just to stand and move. I generally walk in the device for 30-45 minutes, two to three times per week. Living in Minnesota, the winter poses some problems when it gets too cold or the sidewalks become slippery from ice and snow. Because Ekso Indego is slim and lightweight, I can get in my car while wearing the device, giving me the option to go to a mall or large store and walk with it during the winter months.

If you are a veteran with an SCI and are interested in obtaining an Ekso Indego for personal use, please reach out to your physical therapist or medical team at your local SCI/D to see if you qualify. Your local SCI/D center will work with your SCI/D hub to discuss the best options for your screening. If approved, you may be able to be screened for Ekso Indego Personal at your local VA even if they do not have a device on site. If you have questions on if you qualify or if your VA has an Ekso Indego please contact us at www.eksobionics.com/contact.



Ekso Indego Personal & Ekso Indego Therapy Indications For Use (USA)

The Ekso Indego® orthotically fits to the lower limbs and the trunk; the device is intended to enable individuals with spinal cord injury at levels T3 to L5 to perform ambulatory functions with supervision of a specially trained companion in accordance with the user assessment and training certification program. The device is also intended to enable individuals with spinal cord injury at levels C7 to L5 to perform ambulatory functions in rehabilitation institutions in accordance with the user assessment and training certification program. Finally, Ekso Indego® is also intended to enable individuals with hemiplegia (with motor function of 4/5 in at least one upper extremity) due to cerebrovascular accident (CVA) to perform ambulatory functions in rehabilitation institutions in accordance with the user assessment and training certification program. Ekso Indego is not intended for sports or stair climbing.

eksoBIONICS

101 Glacier Point #A
San Rafael, California, USA
(510) 984-1761
info@eksobionics.com

FDA clearance
for clinical use

